United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council hears report by Secretary General's Personal Envoy on Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance, on his latest mission to that country; draft in the Security Council considered.

- Secretary-General is "profoundly disturbed" by events in East Timor and deplores loss of innocent lives; ICRC expresses dismay at "extreme violence" employed by Indonesian security forces during a memorial service.

- General Assembly affirms confidence in International Atomic Energy Agency; appreciates Agency's statements and actions on Iraq's non-compliance with non-proliferation obligations; postpones until next Assembly session question of economic embargo against Cuba.

- Pledges totalling $177 million announced for 1992 programmes of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

- Text on recent disasters in Philippines introduced in Economic and Financial Committee along with proposals on trade and development.

- Political and Security Committee approves texts supporting establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zone in Middle East and zone of peace in Indian Ocean.

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The Security Council this afternoon heard a report by the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance, on his latest mission to that country.

Mr Vance, who has just returned from meetings with senior European Government officials, presented a progress report underlining the seriousness of the situation and reviewing the efforts made by the European Community and United Nations agencies in the humanitarian area.

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Following the presentation, British Ambassador Sir David Hannay told correspondents that European Community members of the Council were now desirous of moving forward to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict and would begin to prepare a draft resolution on the subject.

He said their first effort would be to get the parties back to the conference table and, as a "necessary preliminary ", getting them to stop fighting. The three other main areas of these efforts, he said, were to reinforce the efforts of the Secretary-General and United Nations agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR and others in the humanitarian field ; to strengthen the arms embargo, as Mr. Vance's earlier report had recommended by setting up some control mechanisms, including the imposition of an oil embargo; and to explore the "newly indicated willingness of the parties in Yugoslavia to envisage some kind of international involvement in keeping the peace". Those four areas will now be included in a draft resolution on the subject which is being prepared by the European members of the Council.

Ambassador Hannay further stated that both Mr. Vance and the Secretary General had made it clear that in order to deploy a peace-keeping effort in Yugoslavia, a number of preconditions which had been agreed to by the European Community, would have to be fulfilled. These included an effective and lasting cease-fire, separation of forces and consent of all parties. In order to have "peace-keepers, you have to have a peace to keep", Ambassador Hannay said.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said today through his Spokesman that he profoundly regretted the events in East Timor and deplored the loss of innocent lives. He expressed hope that effective measures would be taken in order to avoid any recurrence in the future.

The Spokesman told correspondents that the Secretary-General had seen official reports of events yesterday in East Timor where two American journalists had been assaulted by the Indonesian military.

He said that the Special Rapporteur on Torture of the Commission of Human Rights was visiting East Timor during the events. The Secretariat was now trying to get in touch with the Rapporteur, who was due to arrive in Jakarta today, to obtain first-hand information on the events for the Secretary-General.

This afternoon, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it was "dismayed at the extreme violence" employed by Indonesian security forces during a memorial service in Dili, the capital of East Timor yesterday, 12 November.

In a press release issued at United Nations Headquarters today, the ICRC said the actions of the security forces had resulted in a large number of deaths and injuries among the civilians gathered in the cemetery. Some thirty people sought refuge in the ICRC delegation as ICRC delegates have the

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permission of the authorities to move about freely in Dili. They were subsequently returned to their homes.

The ICRC has informed the United Nations that it has requested "immediate access to all persons detained in connection with the recent events".

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The General Assembly this morning reaffirmed its confidence in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and noted with appreciation its statements and actions concerning Iraq's non-compliance with its non-proliferation obligations.

The Assembly took that action by adopting a resolution on IAEA'S annual report, by which it commended the IAEA Director-General and his staff for their diligent efforts in the implementation of Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 707 (1991), which called on IAEA to inspect and render harmless Iraq's nuclear weapon capabilities.

Prior to the vote, Iraq introduced an amendment to the draft resolution which would have had the Assembly express deep concern at Israel's non-compliance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981). However, under a proposal made by Argentina, the Assembly decided to take no action on the amendment.

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The 1992 programmes of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been pledged almost $177 million. The pledges were announced at a meeting yesterday of the General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNHCR.

In an opening statement, the President of the General Assembly, Samir S. Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, said the world was witnessing large refugee exodus situations and, as a result, the services of UNHCR were in unprecedented demand. He called for greater burden-sharing to help alleviate the plight of the millions of refugees and displaced persons in the world.

The Director of the Agency's New York office, Albert A. Peters, said the unprecedented increase in UNHCR's needs this year had been matched by an unprecedented response from the international community. The 1992 budget of a projected $599 million, however, represented a considerable reduction compared to the total budget for 1991. Mr. Peters called for sustained support to ensure the timely implementation of UNHCR's 1992 programmes.

Japan, New Zealand and the European Economic Community (EEC) said that their contributions would be announced at a later date. The remainder of the United States' contribution would also be announced at a later date.

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The General Assembly would express support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and for a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean under two draft resolutions approved yesterday by the Assembly's First Committee during its continuing action on disarmament drafts on disarmament issues.

Introduced by Egypt, the text on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East also calls on regional States to place all their nuclear activities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. It was approved by the Committee without a vote.

In his statement, the representative of Egypt, Nabil Elaraby, said such a zone would contribute greatly to the peace and stability of the region. It would contribute to the just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, without which security in the Middle East would always be at risk, he said.

By another draft, which was approved by a recorded vote of 102 in favour to 4 against (Japan, France, United Kingdom, United States), with 28 abstentions, the Assembly would reaffirm its support for the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and reiterate its decision to convene the United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean at Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Committee also approved a draft resolution on preventing an arms race in outer space, which would have the Conference on Disarmament re-establish an Ad Hoc Committee to continue negotiations. The draft was approved by a recorded vote of 135 in favour to none against, with 1 abstention (United States).

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A 45-Power draft resolution by which the General Assembly would note with concern the great loss of life and property caused by recent disasters in the Philippines, including an earthquake, volcanic eruption, typhoons, floods and a massive mud-flow, and request the Secretary-General to assist further the rehabilitation efforts of that country, was introduced this morning in the Assembly's Second Committee (Economic and Financial).

The Committee also heard the introduction of four other draft resolutions and concluded its debate on trade and development, the implementation of the Programme for Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDC's) in the 1990's and science and technology for development.

According to the draft on emergency aid to the Philippines, States and international organizations would also be requested to further extend support to the Philippines in ways that would alleviate the economic and financial hardships borne by the Filipino people during both the emergency and rehabilitation processes.

On trade and development questions, many speakers, including the representative of Malaysia, Hussein Haniff, expressed hope for an equitable

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result of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Mr. Haniff said there was a "crying need" for trade liberalization, sustained domestic and foreign investment, transfer of resources to developing countries and a supportive international economic environment.

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